



Vae Soli



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Chapter 1 by Eve Erkens

I woke up to the sound of the city bouncing on from a wall to another in my tiny apartment.

I flipped over on my bed, one hand wiping off the sweat on my forehead while the other searches for my phone somewhere on the side table. I squinted, sunlight burns my eyes as it peeks through the curtains. My phone says it's 12:34 PM. No missed call, but a message awaits.

"Meet me at the park at 7."

I stared at the sender's name. A sudden flood of memories came crashing over me. The room stood still, even the dust I see in the light seemed to move at a different pace.

Okay, I've gotta get up.

I stood up and lit a cigarette. Walked over to the kitchen counter and started brewing some coffee. Turned on the laptop, scroll, scroll, scroll. Nothing interesting. Everybody's lives in digital. I see my best friend posted some pictures of her and her boyfriend going on trips. I see my high school friends getting married. I see bored people posting this and that. I heard the beep from the brewer.

Poured myself some coffee. Lit another cigarette and sat down. What am I doing? Where am I supposed to be? What am I doing all this for?

I looked over the clock, 1:23 PM. Stared at the message on my phone.

I hit reply.

"Okay. See you there."

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5 hours and 37 minutes to go. A deep sigh escapes my lungs.

Chapter 2 by Eve Erkens



"Meet me at the park at 7," he says.

11 months into this relationship, I still don't understand it. We were two creatures of the same kind meeting amidst a sea of other creatures. We were two souls made of the same essence meeting amidst a galaxy of other mixtures.

We were two seemingly normal people with unimaginable pasts and unfixable damages. We walked among an ocean of people, seemed like we weren't alone, and yet not.

I glanced at the wall clock, 1:43 PM.

Filled the tub with water, maybe that's all I need and I'll feel better.

We'd stare into one another's eyes. A connection builds. Then we'd shrug it off. Sitting side-by-side on a park bench saying nothing. Hearing nothing but one another's occasional sighs. These park meets, we'd do it everyday, even when there's nothing to talk about.

I dipped my foot into the tub, good enough. Submerged myself in the water, wiped my hand and lit another cigarette.

He does remind me of this boy I used to like. He looks almost the same, likes the same things. But it seemed so long ago. And that boy is long gone. It was one drunk night for some asshole who decided driving a car at 180kph in the city is the most fun one can have. But that boy was different.

I don't know what exactly to expect at 7. Is it going to be the same thing? Us talking about things, staring into the darkness of the park, blowing smoke rings and watch the stillness of the air suspend it for a while. All I know is that every fiber of my being wants to see him.

I washed myself, wiped myself, threw on whatever I found first in the closet then sat down by

the couch. Another cup of coffee seems like a good idea.

2:30 PM

I heard three knocks on the

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Chapter 3 by intellikat



I went to the door and opened it as far as the security chain allowed.

"Package to sign for."

I unlatched the chain and took the stylus that the postman offered. Signing on his tablet, I took the long box he also held and without a word, shut the door.

I dropped the box on my kitchen table and downed the last of my coffee. The box had no address. I opened it. Half a dozen fake roses. The kind you buy at a dollar store. I first imagined Roger, but that made very little sense at all. I fingered through the roses to see if there was a card or anything else within, but there was not.

"Fucking hell..." I muttered. But that is when I noticed something wedged into the furled petals of one of the roses. I reached in, but something sharp stung my finger, and I drew back. Blood trickled from the point of my finger. Within the rose petals sat a tiny shard of glass.

I upended the flowers and shook them, turning out a handful of similar shards onto the table. There was a moment of absolute bewilderment, as I went to the sink to watch the cut, but when I returned to the table, I realised that all of the shards were part of a larger whole... they were clearly broken from a larger shape for some edges were jagged and broken while others were smooth and rounded. Even before I had pushed them all together, I knew what shape they would make.

There sat a small heart, with something engraved in the center.

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